

# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
318 South Sixth Street  
Springfield, IL 62701  
Tel: 217/492-4450

RODGER A. HEATON  
U.S. ATTORNEY  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS



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Contact: Timothy A. Bass  
Assistant United States Attorney  
(217) 373-5875

## **Champaign Police Department and DEA Task Force Net Three Charged with Crack Cocaine Offenses in Champaign**

Springfield, IL – Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that the federal grand jury has indicted three individuals who had been charged by complaint as a result of investigations by officers with the Champaign Police Department assigned to a Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force.

One indictment charges Aubrey Butler, 25, and Victor H. Howell III, both of Champaign, with distribution of crack cocaine. Butler is charged with distribution of crack cocaine on three occasions: October 12, October 13, and October 25, 2005. Howell is charged with distribution of crack cocaine on October 20, 2005.

Both Butler and Powell were previously charged by criminal complaint and were arrested on November 7, 2005. Both have also been ordered detained pending trial. The Clerk of the U.S. District Court will schedule arraignment in federal court in Urbana.

In a separate, unrelated indictment, also returned by the grand jury today, Michael C. Billups, 36, of 1813 Jacobbsen, Normal, Illinois, was charged with one count of possession of 50 or more grams of crack cocaine on November 17, 2005. Billups was arrested and charged by criminal complaint on November 17, 2005. He was released on bond pending trial.

If convicted, and if five or more grams of crack is involved in the offense, the defendant faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 5 and up to 40 years of imprisonment, or, if previously convicted of a felony drug offense, a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and up to life imprisonment.

(More)

The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy A. Bass.

Members of the public are reminded that indictments are merely accusations; the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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